

# USDAnews

USDA's Employee News Publication—For You & About You!

## How We're Reaching Out To Service-Disabled Veterans Who Own Small Businesses

**Next Stop: Hitting At Least Three Percent**

by Ron Hall  
Office of Communications

About six months ago USDA formally launched an initiative to increase the number of contracts the Department awards to service-disabled veterans who own small businesses. So, how is that initiative going thus far?

"We haven't met our goal yet—but things are looking better for Fiscal Year 2006," affirmed **Barbara LaCour**, associate director for small business development in the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

As background, the Department issued Secretary's Memorandum 5090-001, dated July 12, 2005 and titled "USDA Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Strategic Initiative." It is an approach to assist disabled veterans—whose disabilities were incurred in the line of duty in the active service of the U.S. Armed Forces—who own small businesses. As stated in the memorandum, the specific intent is to "expand their ability to grow their enterprises utilizing Federal contracting opportunities."

The Secretary's Memorandum was an outgrowth of Executive Order 13360, dated Oct. 20, 2004, and titled "Service-Disabled Veterans."

"Our intent," advised OSDBU program analyst **Stella Hughes**, "is to increase the number of prime contracts and subcontracts that we at USDA award to service-disabled veterans who own small businesses."

"Specifically," added **Joe Ware**, deputy director of OSDBU, "our game plan is to make sure that three percent or more of the contracts, that USDA awards, go to small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. That's not just a goal—it's a federal requirement."

According to OSDBU program analyst **Linda Epstein**, there are currently an estimated two million service-disabled veterans in the U.S. and about 310,000 small businesses owned by them.

Ware pointed out that the Department has undertaken a number of steps in support of this initiative. First, specialists from OSDBU have conducted briefings for USDA agency heads, senior officials, the head contracting officers and the small business coordinators for USDA's 12 contracting agencies, agency-level chief information officers, and agency-level deputy administrators for management on their roles, responsibilities, and suggested "best practices" with regard to this initiative.

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"I'm making a list and checking it twice," quips **Rick Ellis** (right), an APHIS wildlife specialist with the agency's Wildlife Services Office in Palmer, Alaska. "Then we'll donate our cartons of gull eggs and this box of mallard ducks to the Alaska Native Elders' potlatch at the Cultural Center." He and APHIS wildlife specialist **Jerry Morrill** are participating in the agency's program to donate wild game to needy individuals. Note **Corey Slavitt's** story on page 4.—PHOTO BY MARC PRATT

## USDA's Budget For FY 2006 Is Signed Into Law

by Ron Hall  
Office of Communications

It was preceded by one governmentwide short-term funding bill or "continuing resolution." But USDA's appropriations for FY 2006 were ultimately signed into law on November 10, 41 days into the new fiscal year that began on October 1, 2005.

What follows are some highlights of the Department's budget for FY 2006 that are thought to be of particular interest to USDA employees.

**Scott Steele**, director of the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, said that USDA's FY 2006 appropriations provide \$103.6 billion in funding. This figure includes a \$4.2 billion appropriation

for the Forest Service which, for budget purposes, is part of the "Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations."

The \$103.6 billion funding, the end product of congressional conference committee efforts and negotiations with executive branch budget officials, compares to \$103.0 billion in budget authority originally passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, \$103.3 billion in budget authority passed by the U.S. Senate, and \$102.8 billion in budget authority requested by the administration of President **George W. Bush** as part of its FY 2006 governmentwide budget proposal.

The original budget proposal for USDA called for a federal staffing level for FY 2006 of 100,494 full-time equivalent positions, or federal staff years. That would have repre-

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# Mike Johanns *Secretary of Agriculture*

**D**ear Fellow Employees,  
As 2005 comes to a close I would like to congratulate all of you on the many accomplishments achieved during the past year.

The fruits of that hard work sometimes make the headlines. Consider Japan's recent decision to reopen its market to U.S. beef, an issue I have been personally engaged with since my first day on the job. The news media certainly took notice of this latest development, but it would never have happened without the help of scores of USDA employees.

APHIS employees, working with the ARS laboratory system, carried out our enhanced surveillance for BSE. That coordinated effort is producing results that prove what we've long known: U.S. beef is safe. FSIS accompanied Japanese officials through several meat packing plants in order to demonstrate the precision of our meat inspection system. FAS provided up-to-the-minute information to and from Japan that guided President **George W. Bush**, myself, and other Cabinet members in our responses to developments there, ultimately leading to the market opening.

That's just one of many examples I could cite. Then there are those achievements that may never garner much recognition yet comprise the heart and soul of USDA's responsibilities to the public. Here are a few more highlights of your efforts in 2005.

- Enhanced U.S. farm export opportunities by advancing America's commitment to free trade and convincing trading partners to abide by international guidelines;
- Aided U.S. agricultural producers and others battered by severe weather conditions;
- Expanded economic opportunities and security for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through our farm programs;
- Supported the development and use of renewable fuels, such as ethanol

and biodiesel, to provide new revenues to farmers while reducing our nation's dependence on foreign fuel;

- Provided access to a healthy diet for needy households;
- Improved the health of low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children;
- Modernized the Nation's nutrition guidance to reflect the latest scientific information and combat our country's growing obesity epidemic;
- Implemented the President's Healthy Forests Initiative;
- Improved and expanded conservation programs;
- Invested in infrastructure that can bring new economic opportunities and jobs to rural areas; and
- Further advanced food safety and protected U.S. agriculture from both existing and emerging threats.

I want to say a special thank you to all the employees who helped to make our nationwide farm bill listening tour a success. I recognize that a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes effort went into each and every forum and for that I am grateful. Each person who had a hand in the planning deserves credit for the success of the 48-state tour.

To all USDA employees I would say this: Your hard work has made a tangible, positive difference in the lives of Americans—from the safety of the food on their plates to the abundance and affordability of the food in their grocery stores, from the economic viability of America's farms and ranches to the prosperity and opportunity available in rural communities, from the wholesome meals provided to citizens in need to agriculture's contributions to global food security and international commerce. You are making a difference.

On behalf of President Bush and Deputy Secretary **Chuck Conner**, I wish you the happiest of holidays and offer my sincerest gratitude for a job well done. ■

## **Signed Into Law...continued from pg. 1**

sented a decrease of 2,816 federal staff years from the FY 2005 federal staff year ceiling which was estimated on Feb. 7, 2005 to be at 103,310.

As detailed in a story in the January-February 2005 issue of the **USDA News**, at least 5 USDA agencies or staff offices had reflected proposed increases in federal staff years for FY 2006, and at least 4 had reflected proposed decreases from FY 2005 federal staff year levels.

However, based on the funding figure passed into law, Steele projected that the federal staff years for many USDA agencies would basically remain at FY 2005 levels.

OBPA Associate Director **Larry Wachs** noted that USDA's final appropriations for FY 2006 include these items thought to be of particular interest to USDA employees:

① They will fund a 3.1 percent pay increase for non-Senior Executive Service employees at USDA, starting in January 2006. Pay levels for SES employees are determined through a separate performance-based pay system; they will be eligible to receive a maximum cost-of-living increase of 1.9 percent.

② They provide \$110.1 million—a decrease of \$14.5 million from FY 2005—to upgrade

technology in county office service centers. This provides for the continued replacement of aging business and technology systems with a Common Computing Environment (CCE) in those offices. That will allow the service center agencies (Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development) to share data among themselves and their customers and to streamline business processes. Implementation of the CCE began in 1998 and most of its major hardware and software components are in place. This is all designed to increase the ability of USDA customers to interact with USDA staffers over the Internet, so as to save time and money.

③ USDA's appropriations law requests a report from the secretary of agriculture to Congress by March 1, 2006 on actions taken by the Department to initiate "all safe harbor means available to ensure safe and adequate relief and recovery" for USDA employees affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and other storm events in recent months.

④ USDA's appropriations law directs the secretary of agriculture to report to Congress by January 31, 2006 on the continuity of operations at USDA's National Finance Center in New Orleans, as well as on the reestablishment of

NFC's payroll and cross-servicing operations and functions in New Orleans and plans for NFC backup facilities.

⑤ USDA's appropriations law directs the secretary of agriculture to report to Congress by March 1, 2006 on activities to safeguard the U.S. against the introduction of highly pathogenic avian flu.

⑥ USDA's appropriations law "expect[s] USDA to exercise a cautious approach toward any county or local office closures" and requires public meetings and congressional notification, if such actions are proposed.

⑦ Agriculture and Forest Service appropriations laws contain provisions that limit the use of funds for a "competitive sourcing activity"—or "outsourcing"—in certain areas of the Department, including rural development, farm loan, and Forest Service programs.

⑧ USDA's appropriations prohibit the use of funds to produce any prepackaged news story intended for broadcast or distribution in the United States unless the story includes a clear notification within the text or audio that indicates that the prepackaged story was prepared or funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This reinforces USDA's current policy and practice on this issue. ■

# Notes *from USDA Headquarters*

Secretary **Mike Johanns** wound up the last of 52 farm bill forums in Missouri in early November. In total USDA held 52 listening sessions in 48 states.

In December, Japan reopened its market to imports of U.S. beef and Secretary Johanns attended the World Trade Organization's 6th Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong. While the results of the session were mixed, the U.S. did achieve agreement to end export subsidies by the year 2013. Talks continue in 2006.

The Secretary and key agencies also spent much of the fall monitoring the advance of avian influenza as well as preparing in case of an outbreak in the U.S.

**Farm Bill Forums:** Secretary Johanns hosted 22 of the 52 forums and offered the following insights about the sentiments expressed by rank and file farmers and ranchers:

"From what I've heard, I believe that this is a time for the nation to decide whether we continue to rely on a policy structure that was really conceived for a different kind of agriculture 75 years ago. While program crops represent a quarter of the total farm cash receipts, they receive virtually all of the funding. Farmers raising other crops, two-thirds of American farmers really receive little support from the current farm programs.

"Yet I will share with you that these farmers really weren't showing up at these listening sessions and making the case that they should be a program crop. But they were making the case that they would like to see more dollars for research, for market promotion, for increased sanitary and phytosanitary enforcement, dollars to access new markets.

"When you think about it, their argument does carry weight. With 95 percent of the world's population living outside of the U.S. and our own agricultural productivity



"Mmmm, this sure is yummy, and may I please have some more?" is what it sounds like Chief of Staff **Dale Moore** (right) is gamely trying to say—through a mouthful of whipped cream. He was the recipient of a whipped cream pie-in-the-face from Secretary **Mike Johanns**. **Byron Anderson**, associate administrator of RMA and manager of USDA's Combined Federal Campaign activities for 2005, noted that this "one pie-throw for \$3, two for \$5" event—held on November 20 in the Patio of USDA headquarters in Washington, DC—was part of the Department's fundraising activities in support of this year's campaign. **Phil Shull**, a senior foreign service officer in FAS, added that this pie-toss event raised over \$700 for CFC.—**PHOTO BY ALICE WELCH**

currently outpacing consumption...you have to pay attention to that foreign market."

## **Japan Back In The U.S. Beef Market:**

Under the agreement announced Dec. 12, the U.S. is able to export beef from cattle 20 months of age and younger to Japan. More than 94 percent of total U.S. ruminant and ruminant products, with a total export value of \$1.7 billion in 2003, are now eligible for export to Japan. Prior to the December 2003 discovery of the first BSE-infected cow in the United States, the U.S. exported beef and beef products to 119 countries. With the opening of Japan, 67 countries have now established trade in at least selected U.S. beef and beef products.

## **Avian Influenza:**

USDA has worked to prepare for and prevent an outbreak of dangerous strains of avian influenza in the U.S. for two decades. USDA has strict importation restrictions to

prevent the spread of the virus in our country and an elaborate surveillance system in place to monitor our bird populations.

Still it is important to understand that every year there is a flu season for birds just as there is for humans and, as with people, some forms of the flu are worse than others. AI strains are divided into two groups: low pathogenicity (LP) and high pathogenicity (HP). LP, or "low path" avian influenza, has existed in the United States since the early 1900s and is commonly found here. It causes birds to become ill and can be fatal to them. These strains of the disease pose no known serious threat to human health. HPAI, or "high path" avian influenza, is more fatal and transmissible. HPAI is the type currently affecting parts of Asia and Eastern Europe. These strains of the disease in Asia have been transmitted from birds to humans, most of whom had extensive, direct contact with infected birds. HPAI has been detected three

times in the United States: in 1924, 1983, and 2004. The 2004 outbreak was quickly confined to one flock and eradicated. There were no human illnesses reported in connection with these outbreaks. For more information go to: [www.usda.gov/birdflu](http://www.usda.gov/birdflu)

## **Medicare's Low Cost Drug Benefit Plan:**

Beginning in January 2006 prescription drug coverage will be available that allows seniors with no drug coverage and average drug expenses to cut their drug costs by half or more. We're writing about this new benefit because Secretary Johanns wants your help in spreading the word to Medicare eligible friends and family, such as seniors and Americans with disabilities. Benefits begin Jan. 1, 2006 and those who are eligible have until May 15, 2006 to enroll. For more information go to: [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call 1-800-Medicare.

—**PATRICIA KLINTBERG**

# Employees *make these things happen*

## Natural Resources and Environment

### Seasonal Tree From Forest Service Again Graces U.S. Capitol

For the second time in 15 years New Mexico has provided this year's Capitol Christmas Tree—which is now lit and ready for viewing on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol, facing toward the Washington Monument in Washington, DC.

This year's tree, which came from the Santa Fe National Forest in north-central New Mexico, is a 90-year-old, 14,000-lb., 65-foot Engelmann Spruce. "It was originally 80 feet tall when it was found in the forest," explained **Steve Romero**, district ranger with the Cuba Ranger District in the Santa Fe NF and the project coordinator for this year's Capitol Christmas Tree. "Now it's set in the ground with 60 of its remaining 65 feet exposed."

**Gilbert Zepeda**, forest supervisor of the Santa Fe National Forest, added that the Capitol Christmas Tree is provided each year by one of the nation's 155 national forests.

This is the 34th Capitol Christmas Tree that has been provided to Congress by the Forest Service, according to **Beverly Carroll**, an FS program analyst and national coordinator for the Capitol Christmas Tree. "They were provided," she pointed out, "with the support of state and local communities, for use as the Capitol Tree."

This particular tree, which was ultimately selected by **Matthew Evans**, the landscape archi-

tect of the U.S. Capitol, was initially discovered by **Matthew Casaus**, an FS forestry technician on the Santa Fe NF. He discovered it 24 miles west of Cuba, N.M., on the Cuba Ranger District.

It was harvested on November 7 and then prepared for transporting to Washington, DC, on a 70-foot-long trailer. **Pat Leyba**, an FS engineer with the Santa Fe National Forest who helped prepare the tree for its cross-country journey, said that this included gathering and binding the branches and tying them tightly to ensure that the tree fit within the confines of the trailer width. "That wasn't easy, since we were working with tree branches which spanned 30 feet," he recounted.

"Our trek across the country with the tree was historical—and hysterical," quipped **Dolores Maese**, the public affairs officer on the Santa Fe NF. "As we drove over such historical highways as Route 66 and the Santa Fe Trail, we kept kidding each other about what out-of-the-way diner we were all going to end up in, eating our Thanksgiving dinner."

The Capitol Christmas Tree arrived in Washington, DC on November 27. Maese added that most of the tree's journey and related activities were funded through sponsors and donations.

Romero said that this year's tree is decorated with over 6,000 ornaments, hand-crafted primarily by students throughout the state of New

Mexico.

Carroll said the Capitol Christmas Tree—also called the "People's Tree"—is not to be confused with the National Christmas Tree, which grows on the Ellipse behind the White House.

The Capitol Christmas Tree was formally lit on December 8. "That lighting marked the official closing of the Forest Service's Centennial commemorations, which have been taking place nationwide throughout 2005," Carroll said. The July-August 2005 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about "The Greatest Good," a two-hour documentary focusing on the history, legacy, and future of the agency.

The 2005 Capitol Christmas Tree will be lit each evening until January 1, 2006.

—RON HALL



*Certified sawyer **Dave Isackson**, the assistant fire management officer for fire with the Forest Service's Espanola Ranger District in the Santa Fe National Forest, cuts the 90-year-old, 14,000-lb., Engelmann Spruce tree that was selected to serve as the 2005*

*Capitol Christmas Tree.—PHOTO BY PAT LEYBA*

## Marketing and Regulatory Programs

### Our Wild Game Donations Are Directed To Those In Need

We're living in a time when the populations of many common species of wildlife are expanding—as the human population also continues to increase. When humans and wildlife both compete for space, this sets the stage for increasing conflicts between those two groups.

Employees with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are often called upon to strike a critical balance between the needs of people and the needs of wildlife. They use a variety of methods to accomplish this, tailoring their responses to consider the welfare of the animal and the health of wildlife populations, while complying with local, state, and federal laws, and while protecting human health and safety, agriculture, and property.

But sometimes, instead of solutions such as habitat management, dispersal, or relocation of the wildlife, a lethal solution ends up being the option. However, in those situations the ani-

mals in question might end up providing a service to needy individuals. That's because APHIS employees make sure that the meat of the animals is given to those in need of food.

**Bill Clay** is the deputy administrator of the APHIS Wildlife Services Program, the unit responsible for this particular initiative. "Our wildlife biologists and specialists—in at least 20 states and the Virgin Islands," he pointed out, "make sure that the meat resulting from these situations in nature is directed to people who need food."

In fact, he added, in Fiscal Year 2004 APHIS Wildlife Services personnel donated more than 121,000 pounds of wild game—primarily deer and geese—to shelters and food pantries, as well as to needy individuals residing in their local areas. Turkey, moose, duck, elk, bear, and pig meat were also part of the mix. In FY 2005 the number grew to just over 150,000 pounds of meat.

The nature of the business often brings the

most appreciated deliveries just in time for the winter holiday season.

"Specifically," noted **Martin Mendoza**, associate deputy administrator for wildlife services in APHIS, "venison, in particular, is a frequent and plentiful donation during November and December."

"But," he emphasized, "the work of our unit's wildlife biologists and other employees—and their meat donations—are steady throughout the year. For instance, we can often offer geese to charities during spring and summer."

The aforementioned 150,000 pounds of meat donated in FY 2005 don't reflect the donations from the APHIS Wildlife Services staff in Alaska—where the donations are measured in individual units. Accordingly, their donations during FY 2005 included 146 ducks, 20 Canada geese, and 538 eggs.

Wait—was that eggs?!

"Yup, eggs," confirmed **Corey Rossi**, district supervisor at the APHIS Wildlife Services

# Editor's Roundup

## *USDA's people in the news*



**Lloyd Day** is the administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service.

From 2002 until his appointment to this position Day served as a special assistant to the administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service, where he was responsible for coordinating the Department's activities related to Mexico in the areas of foreign trade, the environment, and the Partnership for Prosperity initiative established by President **George W. Bush** and Mexican President **Vincente Fox**. In that position he also served as point-person for FAS on high-priority U.S.-Canada issues.

From 1999-2002 Day was a business development director and industry marketing manager for Tumbleweed Communications Corporation in Redwood City, Calif. From 1994-99 he worked in a number of trade policy positions in California and eventually served as deputy secretary of international trade and investment with the Cali-

fornia Trade and Commerce Agency, where he managed five state-based offices and nine foreign offices to promote international trade and investment priorities for California. He worked for the California Governor's Office of Community Relations from 1992-94, where he coordinated outreach to that state's Hispanic, European, and Native American communities.

**A.J. Yates**, the previous administrator of AMS, is now the under secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, a position he held previously before ultimately joining USDA. ■



**William Brant** is the deputy administrator for international cooperation and development in the Foreign Agricultural Service.

From 2000 until his selection for this position Brant served as FAS's minister-counselor for agricultural affairs in Mexico, based in Mexico City. He was FAS's minister-coun-

selor for agricultural affairs in South Korea, based in Seoul, from 1997-2000, after having served as the agency's minister-counselor for agricultural affairs in China, based in Beijing, from 1993-97.

Brant was deputy director of FAS's Tobacco, Cotton, and Seeds Division at the agency's headquarters office in Washington, DC from 1988-92. From 1984-88 he worked as FAS's agricultural attaché in Pakistan, based in Islamabad, after having been the agency's agricultural attaché in India, based in New Delhi, from 1982-84. He began his career with FAS as an agricultural economist in Washington, DC in 1979.

**Pat Garamendi**, the previous deputy administrator for international cooperation and development in FAS, is now the assistant manager for the California Exposition and State Fair in Sacramento. ■



**Jim Newby** is the assistant administrator for the electric program in the Rural Utilities Service.

Before rejoining USDA, from January 2003 until his selection for this position Newby worked as a private consultant, where he managed a project for USDA that focused on the field structure for the Department's Service Center agencies: the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development. He served as acting deputy under secretary for rural development from 2000-2001, after having been the senior policy advisor to the under secretary for rural development from 1999-2000.

From 1994-99 Newby served as the chief budget officer for the Rural Development mission area. He began his career at USDA in 1980 as a program analyst in the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, focusing on the Department's rural development programs. He worked as a program analyst in the U.S. Department of Commerce during 1978. From 1974-78 he served as director of planning for a regional planning organization for the city of Tulsa, Okla., after having been based in

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Office in Palmer, Alaska. He noted that 39 of the donated eggs were Canada goose eggs, while the majority were mew and herring gull eggs, plus a few from shorebirds.

"Sometimes there are birds at airports posing a threat to aircraft in flight, or gulls attacking people on building tops while technicians work on ventilation units," he said. "When there's a human health or safety issue, we remove the gulls' nests and donate the eggs from the nests to area food banks. It's a good program—we take a byproduct from a wildlife control action and make it usable for people in need."

"The gull eggs are very important to Alaska Natives," Rossi pointed out. "They delight in those meals at such sites as a food-for-elders program and a food bank—both in Anchorage—as well as at goodwill kitchens throughout our state."

"We've heard that some Alaska Native elders have been brought to tears by the gull egg meals," he added. "They talked about how long it's been since they've had traditional native foods like this."

**Terry Smith**, the assistant district supervisor at that Alaska office, explained that egg donations happen mostly in spring and summer. "But when moose are struck by vehicles on any of our projects," he said, "we coordinate with state agency personnel to salvage the meat—while it's still fresh—and deliver it to those in need."

The APHIS Wildlife Services program in Virginia has been donating meat since 1997. Most recently, in FY 2005 the Wildlife Services state office provided 7,495 pounds of game to the needy. "The meat we donated here in Virginia," explained **Chad Fox**, a Wildlife Services district supervisor based in Christiansburg, "was prepared by state-certified meat processors, who then make donations to local food banks."

"We're utilizing resources, the meat's not wasted, and we're helping feed the hungry while managing wildlife at the same time."

**Dave Williams**, the state director of the APHIS Wildlife Services Program in Oregon, based in Portland, said he's modest about his staff's gift of wildlife meat donations—but there's nothing modest about that office's con-

tribution of 17,338 pounds to recipient organizations during FY 2005. Ditto for **Rich Chipman**, state director of the APHIS Wildlife Services Program in New York, based in Castleton. His office contributed 650 pounds of wildlife meat—deer and goose meat—to charity last year. "We state directors," affirmed Williams, "believe that it's all a part of trying to do the right thing, the right way, for the right reasons."

"Wild animals are an important and essential part of our environment," observed Clay. "For centuries they've served our needs in many ways, providing food, clothing, and aesthetic value. In those early years, wildlife was seldom managed."

"But in modern times," he continued, "the overabundance of wildlife at times encroaches on human populations. So maintaining a balance between humans and the needs of wildlife requires sensitivity."

"I like to think our meat donation program reflects that sensitivity," Clay emphasized. "Our valuable resources are not being wasted."

—COREY SLAVITT

Oklahoma City as director of planning for the governor of Oklahoma from 1970-74.

**Blaine Stockton**, the previous assistant administrator for the electric program in RUS, retired from that position following 37 years of service at USDA—all with the Rural Development mission area. ■



**F**rank Boteler is the deputy administrator for economic and community systems in the

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

Before joining USDA, from 1998 until his selection for this position Boteler served as the deputy director of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, based in Olympia. He was deputy director of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, based in Boise, from 1991-98.

From 1987-91 Boteler served as chief of the Planning and Assessment Section of the North Carolina

Division of Parks and Recreation, based in Raleigh. He was an associate professor of forestry at West Virginia University in Morgantown from 1979-87. From 1973-75 he worked in Washington, DC and Hagerstown, Md., as a counselor for teens at risk.

**Alma Hobbs**, the previous deputy administrator for economic and community systems in CSREES, served as the special assistant/director of the Office of Outreach and Diversity within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights until retiring in January 2006 with 33 years of service with USDA. ■



**S**o now we're into winter, and the baseball World Series is over, and for much of the

country it's cold and snowy and sloshy and freezy and YECCHHH—gimme a break! But for **Russ Moody**, baseball is never far from his mind. In fact, right this minute he's probably thinking about how

he spent part of *last* winter—at a baseball fantasy camp.

During the working day Moody is a Farm Service Agency computer specialist at the agency's Kansas City Management Office in Kansas City, Mo. But, for at least five days last February he was a second baseman in Surprise, Ariz., site of the spring training complex of the Kansas City Royals baseball team—and the Royals Alumni Fantasy Camp.

"The camp was open to anyone—at least anyone who had \$3,500 to pay for the experience," quipped Moody. "Participants ranged in age from 30 to 72—I'm 39 now—and included 95 males and one female."

He added that each participant had been assigned a locker to use either in the team locker room or the team training room. "Our uniforms were laid out for us—as clean as they would be for the next five days—waiting for the next day for camp to begin," he said. The number on his uniform was 20. "And," he laughed, "over the next five days I planned to get my money's worth out of the club-

house laundry, to wash my dusty uniform."

But first, that evening Moody and the other participants attended a welcome reception and autograph session. Seventeen former Royals players were present, including such notables as **George Brett**, **Bret Saberhagen**, **John Mayberry**, and **Frank White**.

"I got the autographs of 14 former players on baseball cards that I had of each of 'em," he noted.

The next morning participants attended their choice of infield, outfield, pitching, and catching clinics, with the Royals alumni serving as instructors. That was followed by batting practice—10 swings per participant.

Then every day they'd break for a catered lunch at the spring training complex. "No, lunch *wasn't* followed by a nap—at least not by *me*," Moody quipped. Instead, following what he described as a "rigorous" stretching routine, participants were alphabetically divided into eight teams of 12 players each and—initially—played seven-inning

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## PROFILE PLUS *More About: Teresa Lasseter*



**W**hen **Teresa Lasseter** was nine years old she got her first paying job stringing tobacco on a wooden stick to be hung in the barn to dry. It is cumbersome, sticky work, but just the first in a series of farm jobs she would fill while growing up in rural Brookfield, Ga. The family grew peanuts, tobacco, cotton, and vegetables. But when she was 12, the

family moved to nearby Tifton to take advantage of the public school system. At that point her father changed their mix of crops to tomato and pepper plants grown from seed. From early April until June, she and her siblings would work after school pulling the plants, packing and shipping them north.

"My family has always been in agriculture," she said. Thus it was no real surprise that Lasseter's first job as a young adult was with the old Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service [now the Farm Service Agency] as a temporary employee working as a tobacco marketing recorder. From there began a string of promotions from program assistant, chief program assistant, county operations reviewer, to county executive director in Lee County, Ga. "It was just a natural fit for me, because from the first day I started working I just really enjoyed what I was doing."

She took a hiatus from the government to stay near home while her children were in high school. But she wasn't idle. She was appointed by the governor of Georgia to be director of the Georgia Agrirama, a living agricultural history museum.

Lasseter returned to government service in 2001 when she was named FSA state executive director for Georgia. Then in May 2002 she was cho-

sen to be the agency's associate administrator for programs in Washington, DC. After implementation of the 2002 farm bill, Lasseter returned to Georgia in 2003 intent on helping her husband run their John Deere dealership. Instead the governor appointed her to the Board of the Georgia Ports Authority.

Because of her experience with FSA at the local, state, and federal levels, Secretary **Mike Johanns** asked her to serve as the administrator of the Farm Service Agency. Lasseter said, "We have so many services to deliver. We are charged with many different responsibilities on the local level. I still know employees and producers that I can call and say, 'You know, I hear that this program's not working. So tell me why it's not and tell me what you're faced with out there.' That's definitely an advantage."

In addition to her broad knowledge of FSA, she also displays a quick and friendly wit. Two weeks into the job she attended a meeting of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters. When one broadcaster teased that he might need a translator, referring to Lasseter's Georgia accent, she replied, "You should be able to understand me. I speak agriculture."

**Last Book Read:** *"John Adams"* by **David McCullough**

**Last Movie Seen:** *"Sabrina"*

**Hobbies:** Reading, traveling, gardening, walking

**Favorite Weekend Breakfast:** "My casserole made with sausage, buttermilk, flour, eggs, bell peppers, and tomatoes."

**Priorities In The Months Ahead:** "Serving our customers as timely and accurately as we can and to see what changes need to be made. We need to make sure we have a good business plan. Because I've been on both sides for so long, I can see it from the policy side as well as our customers."

—**PATRICIA KLINTBERG**

scrimmage games among themselves, while being coached by the former big leaguers.

"The teams were created with three designated hitters each," he explained. "So we'd bat 12 players on a team—to give everybody an opportunity to bat—but we'd field 9 players on a team."

By the third day of camp the participants—referred to as the "camper teams"—took on a team totally made up of Royals alumni. That

alumni team played each of the eight camper teams in three-inning games.

"My team was the only team to *not* lose to the alumni," Moody hastened to underscore.

Okay, the one-time big leaguers were *former* players—but they *were* former *players*. So, did they ease up on the camper teams, or were they giving it their all?

"Yeah, I think they took it easy on us," Moody replied.

"Those former players seem to still enjoy every chance to stay involved in the game—even though they're not on the field every day anymore," he added.

"And as for me: the 2006 Fantasy Camp is scheduled for February 6 to 11. I'm gonna be there—and my main goal is to stay off the 'disabled player list' for the whole week," he laughed. ■

—RON HALL

#### Reaching Out...continued from pg. 1

Second, USDA has increased the number of information technology-oriented contracts that it is setting aside for small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. According to **Greg Parham**, associate chief information officer for information resources management in the Office of the Chief Information Officer who is coordinating this particular item, the shared annual goal of USDA's program agencies and staff offices is five percent overall—for information technology-oriented contracts.

"Here's an example of a recent information technology-based *service* contract that is part of this initiative," noted **Lynn Allen**, associate chief information officer for cyber security. "OCIO recently contracted with a company headquartered in Dallas which qualifies under this initiative. That company is currently providing an independent assessment of USDA-wide cyber security programs."

Third, the Office of Procurement and Property Management developed three Blanket Purchase Agreements to be applied to this initiative. "The purpose of developing three Blanket Purchase Agreements," explained **Janice Brown**, a contracting officer in OPPM's Procurement Operations Division who developed the Blanket Purchase Agreements, "is to allow any *procurement office* within USDA—that has the authority to make purchases of *over* \$2,500—to apply this BPA authority to companies which qualify under this initiative." She also noted that BPAs can be used—by appropriate personnel in USDA program agencies and staff offices—to make purchases of *up to* \$2,500 also, as part of this initiative.

Brown advised that the purchases in question, using BPAs, refer to IT hardware and peripherals. "An example of a Blanket Purchase Agreement that is part of this initiative," she said, "is that this past September OPPM contracted with a computer supply firm based in Springfield, Virginia to provide 40 desktop computers for USDA employees located in Beltsville, Maryland."

Fourth, purchases under this initiative have increased for non-information technology-related procurements. According to OSDBU program analyst **Roxanne Lane**, during FY

2005 USDA program agencies and staff offices awarded contracts under this initiative for program support, program management, and staffing services. "For example," she noted, "this past fall the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration contracted with a company, under this initiative, to provide satellite phones for USDA employees working in Montgomery, Alabama, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina."

Fifth, during FY 2005 purchases under this initiative increased for such activities as agricultural and forestry services, construction, manufacturing, real estate appraisal and inspection services, surveying and mapping, facilities support, and grounds maintenance. According to Lane, examples of those purchases, using companies qualifying under this initiative, included the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service contracting for helicopter rentals in Albuquerque; APHIS contracting for aviation fuel in Fabens, Texas; the Agricultural Marketing Service contracting for fresh fruit, for use in school lunch programs nationwide, from a company in Wapato, Wash.; the Agricultural Research Service contracting for grounds maintenance services in Weslaco, Texas; the Rural Housing Service contracting for housing appraisal services in various locations in Louisiana; and the Forest Service contracting for temporary personnel staffing services in Madison, Wis., and contracting nationwide for such forestry support activities as brush clearing, planting, and roadside mowing and maintenance.

Sixth, OSDBU staffers meet frequently with owners of small businesses who are service-disabled veterans. "We familiarize them with how to most effectively market their products and services to USDA program agencies and staff offices," noted Hughes.

So, what were the net results of those actions at USDA in support of procuring goods and services from small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans?

"To meet the three percent goal, USDA requires contracting actions of around \$120 million annually," LaCour advised. "USDA did not achieve the three percent overall goal or the five percent goal for information technolo-

gy purchases for FY 2005. Our current overall figure is 0.55 percent, as of November 2005."

"However, we've made progress here in the Department, we've established a foundation for FY 2006, and—based on the cooperation we've seen from USDA program agencies and staff offices—I believe we're well-positioned to achieve the three percent goal during this fiscal year." ■

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"By capturing these Canada geese," notes **Rich Chipman** (left), state director of the APHIS Wildlife Services Program in New York, "this will help reduce the 'bird strike hazard' at LaGuardia Airport." He and APHIS wildlife biologist **Carl Cranker** are on the shoreline along Flushing Bay in New York City, temporarily sharing a cage with 40 Canada geese. These geese were ultimately processed for possible donation, as part of APHIS's program to donate wild game to needy individuals. Note **Corey Slavitt's** story on page 4.—**PHOTO BY DAN SULLIVAN**



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### Mohammad Yousif Ibrahim Ali

Missing: **4-29-2003**

From: **New Hope, KY**

D.O.B. **8-14-2000**

Sex: **Male**

Hair: **Black**

Eyes: **Hazel**

Height: **3 ft.**

Weight: **40 lbs.**

*If you have information, please call*

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

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### ■ Month of February 2006

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